CIA Activities In Britain Irk Secret Service

By Bernard D. Nossiter
Washington Post Foreign Service

LONDON, March 20—British intelligence is quietly complaining that the Central Intelligence Agency here is breaching the two services' agreement to cooperate, it was learned today.

The normally smooth relations between Britain's Secret Intelligence Service and the CIA have been ruffled by what a knowledgeable source described as "one or two incidents."

No details of the "incidents" were made available. The heart of the complaint is said to be the CIA's failure to provide information after obtaining SIS permission to conduct surveillance operations here.

SIS, it is understood, has been urged by its American counterpart "not to rock the boat." But the British agency, popularly known as MI6, apparently wants its displeasure known so that the practice will stop.

The rule here provides that the CIA must get permission from the SIS to tap phones, intercept mail or conduct other operations in Britain.

"There has been a more or less cozy relationship for a number of years," the source said, and approval of CIA requestshas usually been granted. Lately, the source said, "the relationship has been slightly onesided."

Cord Meyer, chief of the CIA station here, would not answer a telephone request for comment. Such non-responsiveness is his habitual style. A spokesman for the U. S. embassy, where Meyer is simply listed as an "attache," declined to comment.

Meanwhile, left-wing Labor Party members of Parliament today stepped up their campaign to expel Meyer and nine other American diplomats they believe to be CIA officers.

Tom Litterick, the group's leader, declared that Britons "are being bugged, followed and having their mail examined" by the CIA.

"The CIA is operating just like the Russian secret service, the KGB," he said.

"It is not so much top politicians and industrialists which are being spied on, but men who have had Secret Service connections or unusual jobs."

Litterick, a member of the Tribune faction on Labor's left, said his source for this was Victor Marchetti, a former CIA official. With John Marks, Marchetti has written "The Cult of Intelligence," a controversial expose of the CIA.

Litterick and 33 other Tribune members have signed a motion to declare Meyer and the nine others American embassy officials persona non grata. They charged that the CIA had been involved in "the subversion and overthrow of governments" in Guyana, Iran, Guatemala, Chile "and other countries."

Prime Minister Harold Wilson, eager to strengthen ties with the United States, is trying to brush off the Tribune attack. Earlier this week, he told Parliament that he would set up his own inquiry if American investigations disclosed any improper CIA activity here.

The Laborites have already embarrassed the agency by publicly naming Meyer and their other targets. They are Benjamin Price, John Coffey, Spencer Braham, Sidney Bearman, John Reed, William McGhee, Joseph Then, Joseph Sherman and George Ford. All except Reed are carried in the diplomatic list as "attache." Reed is described as "attache (political-military)."

The tribune group deduced that the 10 are CIA officers from their official biographies.

Tonight, the London Evening News added to their disreport of their names and Loncomfort with a front page don addresses.

Stan Newens, another Labor parliamentarian who organized the protest, conceded tonight that he had no knowledge of any wrongdoing by the CIA in Britain. But, he said, "I don't want agents of any country doing anything we don't know about. They should be kicked out."